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**SCENE 1**

*(The classroom at The Exceptional Childhood Center, a highly competitive preschool for exceptional children. There are various preschool toy boxes and two tables, one of which is covered in shaving cream.)*

*(Sudden spotlight on REGGIE as he looks up and out to the audience.)*

**MS. PATTERSON'S VOICE:** *(Cheery, welcoming:)* Hello, scholar! You must be Reggie Watson. Welcome to the Exceptional Childhood Center. My name is Ms. Patterson. Now remember, it is your first day, so I want to see you on your best behavior.

**REGGIE:** *(To Ms. Patterson, nervously:)* Thank you, Mrs. Patterson.

**MS. PATTERSON'S VOICE:** *(Suddenly stern:)* It's Ms. Patterson, Reggie.

**REGGIE:** *(In spotlight, to the audience:)* If there's anything that life has taught me so far, it's that your future is determined at birth. Or actually, in my case, determined *before* birth, since my parents put me on the waiting list for the Exceptional Childhood Center before I was even conceived. Then, one day, after my parents' amicable divorce and healthy co-parenting arrangement, a miracle happened: an opening appeared and my name took a magnificent journey from the top of the waiting list to the bottom of the accepted list. Here I am now: entering the third most prestigious preschool in the nation midyear. My hair is combed, my lunch is packed, and if I can just make it through today, I'll be — *(Comforted by the words:)* — set for life. I have one day to prove that I'm exceptional. No mistakes, no tantrums, no...accidents. It all starts here.

*(Lights come up, SUSAN enters stage left carrying her backpack)*

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*and several picture books.)*

**REGGIE:** *(Suddenly noticing her:)* Oh, hi there! Are you in this class too?

**SUSAN:** Yes. My name is Susan Crawford. You must be the new student.

**REGGIE:** Yeah, I'm Reggie Watson. Wow...those books look like they have some big words in them.

**SUSAN:** I take pride in my education, Reginald. If I don't get the most out of preschool, my future self will surely regret it. And I can't waste my highly gifted status that my parents always brag about.

*(Susan puts her things down upstage as AIDEN enters stage right, FRANKIE excitedly squeezing his hand.)*

**AIDEN:** Ah, the ol' schoolhouse.

**REGGIE:** Hi, I'm Reggie, the new student.

**AIDEN:** The first day at The Exceptional Childhood Center. The most terrifying trial period in existence. One strike and you're out of here.

*(Sees Reggie freaking out.)*

But what do I know? I got in because I'm a legacy, like my little bro Frankie. Just remember, if you got problems, you come to me. Repeating the same class two years in a row pumps a lot of wisdom into you.

**SUSAN:** Now if only Aiden would channel that "wisdom" into controlling his tantrums, he might actually graduate.

**AIDEN:** For your information, I've learned my lesson. I am now a master of self-control.

**FRANKIE:** *(To Reggie:)* Don't listen to her. Aiden is the

smartest and coolest and most awesomest big brother ever!

*(Aiden goes upstage with Frankie following close behind and haphazardly throws his backpack down as ZIVA enters stage left.)*

**ZIVA:** *(Seeing Reggie, very cryptic:)* You're not Trevor...

**REGGIE:** Trevor?

**SUSAN:** The kid you replaced. He wasn't a fit for the school. Culled from the herd, as it were.

**AIDEN:** I heard he was kicked out for saying a bad word!  
*(Whispering:)* Bosoms!

**FRANKIE:** Bosoms isn't a bad word.

**AIDEN:** Yes it is. I've traveled life's road two years longer than you, Frankie. *(Whispering:)* Bosoms— *(Not whispering:)* —is a bad word.

**FRANKIE:** You're right, Aiden. You always are.

**ZIVA:** *(Dryly:)* I heard he killed a guy.

**FRANKIE:** Aiden, she's scaring me!

*(Frankie runs and cowers behind Aiden.)*

**REGGIE:** *(To Ziva, rather nervously:)* Hey, I never caught your name.

**ZIVA:** *(Not looking at him:)* It's Ziva. But a name is just a label, a sticker ever so casually slapped onto the individual, disguising his or her true character. Now if you'll excuse me, I have Barbies to decapitate.

**REGGIE:** ...How did *she* get into the school?

**AIDEN:** Her parents are big donors. You're standing in the Ziva Collins Playroom of Smiles.

*(Susan, Aiden, Frankie, and Ziva all sit down on the floor, Aiden and Frankie playing with various toys, Susan reading one of her books, and Ziva rearranging the limbs of Barbie dolls.)*

**REGGIE:** So...may I parallel play with you guys?

**SUSAN:** Well, I'm currently engrossed in *The Little Engine That Could*, an inspirational tale of challenge and personal growth. Classic.

**REGGIE:** You can read? Are we supposed to know how to do that already!?

**SUSAN:** Let me put it this way: Trevor couldn't read.

**AIDEN:** He was kicked out, remember? *(Whispering:)* Bosoms!

**ZIVA:** Killed a guy. The sea ran red with his blood.

**FRANKIE:** I heard aliens came down and took him to their planet and put him in a people zoo but he escaped and flew to the sun!

**AIDEN:** *(To Frankie:)* Where'd you hear *that*?

**FRANKIE:** The boy's room.

**AIDEN:** What are you talking about? You don't use the boy's room. You're not even potty trained. You still wear diapers.

**FRANKIE:** *Ahem...*pull ups.

**REGGIE:** Wow, if they can just kick someone out like that, I better watch my step! I could be next! I need to completely apply myself to being a good fit for this school.

**AIDEN:** Then just don't say — *(Whispering:)* — Bosoms.

**ZIVA:** And don't burn down an orphanage.

**FRANKIE:** I thought you said Trevor killed a guy.

**ZIVA:** How do you think he did it?